

General Subjects Section
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1948 - 1949

THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST AIRBORNE TASK FORCE IN THE
INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE. 15 - 20, AUGUST 1944
(SOUTHERN FRANCE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of an Assistant G-2)

Type of operation described: AIRBORNE ASSAULT IN CONJUNCTION
WITH AN AMPHIBIOUS LANDING

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST AIRBORNE TASK FORCE IN
THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE 15 - 20 AUGUST 1944
(Personal Experience of an Assistant G-2)

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of the First Airborne Task Force and its participation in the airborne invasion of Southern France during the period 15 - 20 August 1944.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quebec Conference in August 1943 advanced the idea of invading the southern coast of France in conjunction with the Normandy invasion. At the time Allied Force Headquarters in North Africa was directed to study all aspects of such a move. (1)

This operation was outlined in instructions from Allied Force Headquarters to the planning staff of the United States Seventh Army 29 December 1943 in Algiers, North Africa. Initially to be known as Operation ANVIL, and to be launched against the southern coast of France with the target date May 1944, it was to be staged in conjunction with the invasion of Northern Europe. (2) Its purpose was to establish a Mediterranean beachhead, and from there to exploit this salient toward the French cities of Lyon and Vichy. Seventh Army staff officers began the planning for the invasion in Algiers 12 January 1944. (3)

The tentative plan envisaged an assault using two or three infantry divisions in the bridgehead, subsequently building up to a total of ten divisions for the exploitation northward. These assaulting divisions were to be covered by Commandos or Rangers who would neutralize the islands off the coast prior to H-Hour, while Airborne troops dropping on inland targets would extend the bridgehead inland and prevent the enemy from reinforcing his troops in the target area. (4) Toulon was selected as the first ANVIL objective, followed

(1) A-7, p. 3; (2) A-1, p. 2; (3) A-1, p.3; (4) A-1, p. 12

by Marseille, and then exploitation was to begin northward. The plan was later modified because of increased enemy resistance in Italy. Troop priorities were given to that operation. Also the amphibious equipment originally planned for the operation was diverted to the northern invasion forces. Consequently the target date was changed, and it was not until several subsequent target dates had been scheduled and postponed that the final date was set. (5)

General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, in spite of some debate with Lord Montgomery and General Sir Henry Wilson, campaigned vigorously for the southern assault. He did so on the basis that additional port facilities were badly needed for the conquest of Europe. He was supported in this contention by General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army. (6) The argument of General Eisenhower bore fruit in late June 1944 when he recommended that the invasion be no longer postponed. The date was then set for 15 August 1944. Southern France was to be invaded. (7)

The operational code name ANVIL was changed to DRAGOON for security reasons on 1 August 1944. (8)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

The intelligence officer, Seventh Army, prior to D-Day, had secured much information about the enemy strength, disposition, morale and capabilities. In addition, detailed information had been gathered about the terrain and climate of the target area. This information will be discussed for orientation purposes as follows:

1. Enemy Troops (See Map A)

The German Nineteenth Army was charged by the German High Command with the defense of Southern France. (9) The German General Staff had shifted four reputedly crack divisions of the Nineteenth

(5) A-1, p. 19; (6) A-15, p. 231; (7) A-1, p. 25; (8) A-1, p. 56;
(9) A-1, p. 32.

Army to Northern France because of the Normandy invasion. To compensate for those losses, the 198th and 716th Infantry Divisions, as well as the 11th Panzer Division, were transferred to Southern France. (10) Prior to D-Day, the Nineteenth Army had in the southern sector nine divisions with which to counter a possible Allied invasion. These divisions were distributed along the entire coast of Southern France to ward off possible invasion at any point. ^{planned} All conceivable defense preparations were made by the German Nineteenth Army. The 716th Infantry Division was stationed in the southwest at Perpignan to protect the army's west flank. This division had suffered heavy losses in Normandy and had been sent south to reorganize. Its fire power was considered to be 50 percent effective and its troop strength was approximated at 8000 men. (11)

To the north were two divisions. The 198th located at Narbonne was composed largely of Bohemians and Czechs who had been picked up while fighting on the Russian front. The effective strength of this unit was 10,500 troops. The 189th Reserve Division was at Montpellier, and was reported to have four infantry battalions and one battalion of artillery. (12)

The 388th Division, with two limited service regiments, was centered at Arles to defend the Rhone River. This unit was under strength.

The 244th and 242d Infantry Divisions were at Marseille and Toulon. Both units were at 85 percent of their normal strength and were composed of inexperienced young men.

The 148th Reserve Division was stationed at Cannes and Nice. This unit was considered formidable.

The 157th Reserve Division, a training unit, had been committed against the underground forces and was thought to be dissipated.

The 11th Panzer Division was in or about the Rhone River area.

(10) A-1, p. 34; (11) A-1, P. 32-33; (12) A-1, p. 33.

It was reputed to be the only completely mobile unit in the Nineteenth Army. (13)

A subordinate headquarters, the LXII Corps, was located in Draguignan. (14)

For practical purposes the G-2, Seventh Army estimated the enemy forces in Southern France to approximate five reasonably effective divisions. Enemy morale was presumed to be low. This was attributed to the lack of motor transportation, constant attack from the Maquis, and the presence of many non-Germanic troops serving under duress. The German High Command had made so many commitments elsewhere that they precluded the augmentation of the above forces into a cohesive front. (15)

Prior to D-Day most of the German Air Force in the southern sector had been dissipated. It was estimated that Allied air forces would have immediate air superiority. (16)

2. Terrain of the Target Area (See Map B)

Three mountain masses, separated by two corridors, dominated the terrain of the target area. The Alps-Jura mountains are situated at the Italian border, the Pyrennes at the Spanish border, and the Massif de Central in the central area; the Massif de Maures of the central chain are located north of Toulon. The Rhone River corridor in the west central area, and the Argens River corridor in the east central portion of the target area separated these masses.

The Allied strategy was to exploit these corridors.

At the base of the Massif de Maures were the invasion beaches. (17)

All of this information was made available to the First Airborne Task Force intelligence section through intelligence channels. Photo interpretation reports, terrain studies, and reports from Clandestine Agents provide the bulk of this information.

(13) A-1, p. 33-34; (14) A-3; (15) A-1, p. 34; (16) A-1, p. 31;
(17) A-3, Sec. I; A-1 p. 28.

SEVENTH ARMY PLAN

The Seventh Army final plan for DRAGOON contemplated the use of the United States VI Corps as the assaulting echelon. An airborne force and a Commando force were to assist the VI Corps in establishing the bridgehead. Later French Armee "B" was to pass through this beachhead and assist in the exploitation to the north. Appropriate training for ground units was started immediately.

Seventh Army ordered the assault on the southern coast in its field order of 29 July. The objective was to secure a beachhead east of Toulon and then assault and capture the city. (See Map B) The Western Naval Task Force and the XII Tactical Air Command had been designated to support the coastal assault. Command of the expedition during the seaborne phase, until the ground forces were established on the beaches was the responsibility of the Commander, Western Naval Task Force. This command was later passed to the Commanding General of the United States Seventh Army. (18)

Annex No 1 to this field order shows the following assignments and missions: (See Map C)

1. Designated as Kodak Force, the United States VI Corps was composed of the United States 3d Infantry Division Reinforced, the United States 45th Infantry Division Reinforced, and the United States 36th Infantry Division Reinforced. The 1st French Armored Division Reinforced was also assigned to Kodak. The mission of this force was to make a daylight assault at H-Hour on D-Day. Enemy beach defenses on the beaches between Cape Cacaiaire and Agay were to be destroyed and followed by a rapid advance inward to contact airborne forces.

2. Designated as Rugby Force, the First Airborne Task Force was to land in the Le Muy area, starting at first light on D-Day to prevent the movement of enemy forces into the assault area from the direction

(18) A-2, Appendix; F.O. #1, 29 July 44; A-1, p. 57.

of Le Muy and Le Luc. Rugby Force was to be attached to Kodak when contact was made.

3. Sitka Force (First Special Service Force) was to assault the islands of Pert Cros and Levant under cover of darkness during the night of D-1, with the mission to destroy all enemy defenses there and to serve as a covering for the Kodak Force.

4. Two additional forces, Romeo and Garbo, were composed of French Commandos and the II French Corps. II Corps was to enter the operation over the beaches and assist in the assault on Toulon, while Romeo Force was to seize and hold Cape Negre.

Diversionary activities were also contemplated in the plan. (19)

Other troops assigned to Seventh Army were committed later and did not figure in operations during this period.

The Provisional Troop Carrier Air Division was assigned the mission of transporting Rugby Force to the drop and landing zones. (20)

SITUATION OF THE FIRST AIRBORNE TASK FORCE

The First Airborne Task Force came into being 11 July 1944. It was first designated as Seventh Army Airborne Division (Provisional) and was composed of miscellaneous airborne units in Italy. The amalgamation of these units was begun at Lido de Roma, near Rome. (See Map A) Pending at this time, was the arrival of a staff of trained airborne officers from the 13th Airborne Division and the Airborne Center at Camp Mackall, North Carolina. These officers had been especially requisitioned for this mission and had been flown directly to Italy from North Carolina. (21)

Major General Robert T. Frederick was assigned to command the Force. This officer, 37 years old, had performed under fire in an outstanding manner while commanding the First Special Service Force on the

(19) A-2, Appendix; F.O. #1, 29 July 44; (20) A-5, p. 3; (21) Personal knowledge.

Anzio Beachhead. When amalgamation was complete, the force consisted of the 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team (460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, 75MM, attached), the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion Combat Team (463d Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, 75MM, attached), the 550th Glider Infantry Battalion, the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion (reinforced), and the British Independent Second Parachute Brigade. Special troops supporting these combat units consisted of the 602d Pack Artillery Battalion (75MM), the 887th Airborne Aviation Engineer Company, the 512th Signal Company, Antitank Company, 442d Infantry (six pounders), Company "A", 2d Chemical Battalion, Company "D", 83d Chemical Battalion (4.2 mortars), and special ordnance, quartermaster, medical and resupply units. (22)

With the exception of the 550th and the 551st Battalions, all combat units of the force had had some battle experience with the Fifth and Eighth Armies in Italy. Most of this experience was in ground combat. Only the 509th Battalion had participated in previous airborne operations. The 517th Combat Team had had only ten days of battle experience. (23)

The unit, somewhat larger than the old brigade, was renamed The First Airborne Task Force on 21 July 1944, because the original name was considered to be a misnomer.

The Provisional Troop Carrier Air Division, the air unit directed to transport the task force to France, had headquarters nearby. This air division, composed of the 50th, 51st, and 53d Troop Carrier Wings was commanded by Major General Paul L. Williams. (24)

The total strength of the First Airborne Task Force was 9732 officers and men. Aircraft assigned to transport the force consisted of 535 C-47 and 53 type aircraft, with 465 CG4A and Horsa gliders. (25)

(22) Personal knowledge; A-5, Sec II; (23) Personal knowledge;
(24) Personal knowledge; (25) A-1, p. 111; A-17.

The First Airborne Task Force was especially created and trained for the assault on Southern France. Beginning at early light, the force was to land at various hours on D-Day some 20 miles inland from the beaches, with the aforesaid mission of blocking enemy reserves and reducing enemy defenses in the area. According to the army plan, the force was to be relieved by ground troops upon contact. (26)

Three drop and landing zones were chosen near the villages of Le Muy, La Motte, and Trans-en-Provence. (See Map D) Zones "A" and "O" were flat and gently rolling, and were thought suitable for glider and parachute operations. Drop Zone "C" was astride a rugged mountain plateau in the Massif de Maures chain. This zone was thought suitable for parachute landings. One intelligence source had indicated that the flat lands of the drop zone had been mined and was provided with anti-air landing stakes. Since this information could not be verified by photograph analysis or other sources, it was decided to risk landing in these areas. (27)

Enemy troops, known to be in and around the airborne sector, consisted of elements of the 148th Reserve Division, the 242d Infantry Division, the 1048th Assault Gun Unit (size not determined), several hundred cadets, and the headquarters of the LXII Corps. All of these units were thought to be considerably under strength. (28)

TASK FORCE PLAN OF ATTACK

The First Airborne Task Force, in accordance with its assigned mission, issued instructions for the assault to its subordinate units in field order No 1 during early August at Lido De Roma. The plan had been approved by Seventh Army. (29)

The 517th Combat Team was ordered to land at Drop Zone "A", beginning at 0430 hours on D-Day. It was to secure the zone, block all approaches from the north, and destroy enemy forces located in the zone. This

(26) Personal knowledge; (27) Personal knowledge; (28) A-3, Annex D; Personal knowledge; (29) Personal knowledge.

general area lies in the Argens and Nartuby Valleys between Le Muy, Braguignan, and Vidauban, and includes the main road nets which connect the Rhone Valley and the Marseille-Toulon districts. Villages in or near the area are LaMatte, Trans-en-Provence, and Les Arcs. Intelligence reports had indicated that all bridges in the area had been prepared for demolition. It was considered doubtful that the enemy had sufficient engineer personnel to demolish them in the event of an airborne operation. Aerial photo interpretation had revealed this zone to be suitable for landing. (30)

The British Second Parachute Brigade was ordered to drop at Drop and Landing Zone "Q", beginning at 0430 hours on D-Day, secure the zone and block Highway 7 south of Le Muy. It was then to assault and capture Le Muy, destroying enemy installations in that vicinity.

This sector of operations was the largest designated for the force. It lay 2 kilometers north of Le Muy and included the village of Le Mitau. The terrain in the zone was considered good for both parachute and glider landing operations.

As mentioned before, one intelligence report from a clandestine agent had indicated the presence of anti-airlanding stakes. Since it was accessible to Le Muy, it was decided that most of the glider elements would attempt landing on that zone. (31)

The 509th Parachute Battalion Combat Team was directed to land at Drop Zone "C", beginning at 0430 on D-Day. It was to secure the zone and be prepared to assist the Second Brigade in the capture of Le Muy.

This drop zone was the most rugged of all the three zones. Located on a high plateau, it was the dominant terrain in the entire area. It overlooked both Le Muy and Highway No 7 from Frejus. (32)

The 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion was to land at 1800 hours on D-Day in Drop Zone "A", and be prepared to assist the 517th Regi-

(30) Personal knowledge; (31) Personal knowledge; (32) Personal knowledge.

mental Combat Team in its operations. (33)

The 550th Glider Infantry Battalion was ordered to land at Landing Zone "O" at 1800 hours on D-Day. This battalion was the task force reserve. (34)

The 602d Pack Artillery Battalion was ordered to land at Landing Zone "A"; it was placed in direct support of the 551st Battalion.

Company "D", 83d Chemical Battalion and Company "A", 2d Chemical Battalion were to land at 1800 hours in Landing Zones "A" and "O" respectively, and be prepared to support operations upon landing.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, First Airborne Task Force, was to land at Landing Zone "O" in two echelons. The advanced Command Post Group was scheduled to land at 0800 hours, and the remainder at 1800 hours on D-Day. (35)

PREPARATIONS FOR THE ASSAULT

All of the units comprising the First Airborne Task Force closed in the Rome area by mid July, and combat team training began on an extensive scale. Many of the glider elements had had no recent combined airborne training. First priority was given to refresher training in airborne techniques. Other units scheduled for glider operations had had no glider training at all. Orientation training was scheduled for these units. (36)

Intelligence activities during the period prior to the assault were conducted at a feverish pace.

Lt Col William J. Blythe, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, was faced with the task of securing, assimilating and evaluating the information of the enemy, with most of his staff inexperienced. (37) I was serving in the capacity of Assistant Intelligence Officer on

(33) Personal knowledge; (34) Personal knowledge; (35) A-11, p. 2; Personal knowledge; (36) (37) Personal knowledge.

this staff.

Great difficulty was encountered at the outset in securing a sufficient number of maps of the proper scale for the target area. In many instances such maps, when requisitioned, were late in arriving and were made up improperly. It was necessary, in several instances, for the G-2, or his representative, to make personal visits to the map depots in order to expedite the delivery of these maps.

(38)

The intelligence section was more fortunate with respect to aerial photographs of the target area. These, however, while adequate in number, were of a scale so small that it was extremely difficult to make a thorough interpretation of them. While making this statement, it should be pointed out that the British Photographic Interpretation Team attached to the section worked meticulously to evaluate those photographs properly. (39) This they did in a superior manner. This team made annotated photographs of some of the important enemy defensive installations which were distributed to platoon level in several instances. The team had been borrowed from the British Eighth Army and did not accompany the task force in its mission.

A valuable aid in conducting the terrain study was a photo model on a scale of 1:25000 which was set up in the force war room and was used in all of the briefing at Force Headquarters. The model had been prepared by army engineers. Several attempts to secure additional copies of this model for use at combat team level were made without success. This constituted a handicap for the combat team commanders who, while having access to the model themselves, were unable to assemble their complete staffs for adequate study of the terrain. In as much as no personal reconnaissance could be made, the lack of a thorough and complete terrain analysis on the part of these commanders made their several tasks even more difficult. Annotated

(38) A-10, p. 6; A-5, p. 6; Personal knowledge; (39) Personal knowledge.

photographs which were distributed alleviated this situation partially. (40)

The 550th Glider Infantry Battalion was charged with the training of the 602d Pack Artillery Battalion, the 442d Infantry Antitank Company, the 887th Airborne Aviation Engineer Company, Company "A", 2d Chemical Battalion, Company "D", 83d Chemical Battalion, 512th Signal Company, and miscellaneous divisional units. Training consisted of loading and lashing, orientation flights, and in final phases, a practice air landing on a simulated landing zone. This practice landing was made by key personnel of the units. Refresher training for parachute elements was given under the supervision of the Airborne Training Center near Rome. Skeletonized dropping on simulated drop zones and practice assembly problems were given at the conclusion of the refresher training. In addition to the training given the combat elements, three airborne pathfinder teams were organized and appropriate training in radar and radio aids to be used in the operation was conducted. (41)

At the conclusion of this training the mission of the First Airborne Task Force was at hand.

THE RUSE

In accordance with the Seventh Army plan, an airborne diversionary drop was made at 0205 on D-Day near the village of Ciotat. This village is situated between the cities of Toulon and Marseille.

(See Map E) Designed to serve two purposes, it was to create initially the illusion of an airborne assault in that area; secondly, that a southern airborne corridor existed. The effect which this ruse had on enemy plans will be discussed in succeeding pages of this report. Suffice it to say, it was successful in conduct as well as effect. Six aircraft of the troop carrier division participated in the mission and dropped from an altitude of 600 feet some 5000 pounds of para-

(40) Personal knowledge; (41) A-5, p. 7; Personal knowledge.

chute dummies, rifle simulators and "Window",* to give the effect of mass flight on the enemy radar screens.

While leaving the false drop zone area, pilots reported loud explosions and observed gun blasts. This indicated that the enemy had been aroused. (42)

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

Navigation
The airborne phase of the operation commenced shortly after midnight from ten air bases, stretching from the Ciampino field, south of Rome, to Fallanica, north of Grosseto. (See Map F) Elements of the force had moved from Lido de Roma and had closed into the marshalling fields by 1800 hours, 14 August 1944.

At Voltlene Air Field, 65 kilometers northwest of Rome on the Mediterranean Sea, it was clear, cool and very dark. Here glider elements of the operations and intelligence sections were located. During the previous evening, religious services were held by the chaplain and the troops were shown a movie. After briefing, the commanders had urged the troops to get as much sleep as possible. All men were bedded down on the open field near their gliders by 2200 hours. (43)

I should point out here that the attitude of the troops was one of confidence and that the morale was high.

It is interesting to note that many gliders were decorated with fancy names. For instance, the ship in which I, as assistant intelligence officer, was riding was named "Nina From Carolina". This was the first ship in the serial. ^{four} The second ship, carrying the senior chaplain was dubbed "The Leakin' Deacon". This is pointed out as indicative of the morale of the troops at Voltone.

Shortly after midnight the first parachute serial took off. This serial was observed at the Voltone Field at about 0100 hours. The flight pattern could be picked out by the flashing of the red

(42) A-5, p. 9; A-10, p. 9; A-1, p. 104; (43) Personal knowledge.

*Tinfoil dropped from planes to affect enemy radar.

and green lights on the wings of the ships as they moved out to sea. On the ground below, the first glider serials were already being prepared for flight. Pathfinder teams, equipped with radar, radio and homing devices, had already taken off and were well on their way. (44)

The route for the flight proceeded northwest to the first over-water check point, the island of Elba. From there the route advanced to the northeast corner of Corsica. From Corsica the route was on an azimuth, east of a designated corridor, to the French coast. This leg of the aerial route had been clearly outlined to both naval and air personnel to forestall any firing by naval anti-aircraft artillery at the Allied planes participating in DRAGOON. From the French coast east of St. Raphael the route went north to the drop zone at Le Muy. (45)

The first glider serial was airborne at approximately 0400 hours. No difficulty was encountered as the individual gliders were snatched from the field. Gaining altitude, the sky train circled the airfield and proceeded out to sea and to its first check point at Elba. Rendezvous with ships from other airfields was to be made here. The train arrived at Elba on schedule and the rendezvous was accomplished. From this island, the serial turned northwest and headed for Corsica. By this time the rays of the sun were beginning to show at the horizon. Two and one-half hours from take-off the gliders were passing the high mountain peaks of Corsica and on their way to France. Some thirty minutes later the glider pilot in the first glider received word from the tug plane that it was turning back. Troop Carrier headquarters had reported heavy ground fog had been encountered by planes which had dropped parachutists earlier. Under these circumstances the commander of the troop carrier division thought it too dangerous to release gliders. Soon the gliders were heading in the direction whence they had come. The sun, which had been shining from the right side of the glider, was beginning to shine from the left. (46)

(44) Personal knowledge; (45), (46) Personal knowledge; A-11, p. 4.

Morale at this time had suffered a setback. The crew had become very quiet.

A few minutes later the sun resumed its original position, shining in the right window. Previous orders had been rescinded and the sky train was on its way to its original destination. The orders were to proceed to the landing zone without delay.

Horsa gliders in the serial were ordered to return to Italy. *why*

*seriously
offensive
minutes* (47)

During the flight some misfortunes occurred. One glider in the serial broke loose from the tow and landed in the sea. The task force communications officer was in this glider. He and his crew were picked up by navy launch. They were taken to the shore near one of the marshalling fields, and flew in the second glider echelon which landed at 1800 hours on D-Day. Another glider was lost in flight when it broke up and disintegrated in mid-air; its entire crew perished.

(48)

Little opposition was encountered as the sky train crossed the coastline. Scattered puffs of smoke indicated that some anti-aircraft guns were active, but no damage was incurred. Ships supporting the landings now in progress were observed laying down an artillery concentration.

Earlier photo reconnaissance had shown the presence of a portion of terrain adjacent to the landing zone which resembled the five fingers of a hand. It had been decided during planning to use this terrain feature as a check point for the release of gliders. (See Map F)

The serials were over land about six minutes when this terrain feature was observed. Here was the landing field. The planes circled to the west and the number one glider pilot released the first glider. It had been relatively quiet to this point. A burst of bullets whipped

(47) Personal knowledge; A-11, p. 4; (48) Personal knowledge.

through the rear of the fuselage. It was assumed that an isolated sniper had fired at the ship. No injury occurred. (49)

While descending, the presence of many empty parachutes was apparent. The British Second Independent Brigade had landed at 0510 hours on this field.

At an altitude of one hundred feet, the field was suddenly revealed as being full of anti-air landing stakes. The pilot had to maneuver swiftly to avoid crashing into one of them. This necessitated a severe "belly landing", but fortunately no one was injured. On leaving the ship one could see the stakes 12 feet high and spaced at 50 foot intervals covering the field. (50)

The soil under foot was the soil of France—a soon-to-be-liberated France. In the distance naval gun fire could be heard as it reverberated in the sky.

THE ASSAULT

It will be necessary here to depart from a running narrative of events as they were experienced by the author in order to discuss action on all combat team fronts as it occurred. Effects of this action on the enemy, as it developed at the intelligence section, will be interwoven into the story.

1. D-Day Activities, 15 August 1944

The saying that "In Battle Confusion Reigns" is appropriate when discussing the events of D-Day, and those that followed.

The first departure from the original plan occurred at 0430 hours, 15 August, when 45 ships released their human cargo prematurely. ^{Too} Some personnel was ^{was} landed as far as 20 miles from the designated drop zones.

About 20 planes carrying elements of the 509th Battalion Combat Team released their sticks near St. Tropez on the coastline. (See Map G) The commanding officer* was in one of the planes. Two "sticks"

(49), (50) Personal knowledge.

*CO, 463d FA Bn, an element of the Combat Team.

were dropped in the sea, but all personnel was able to swim to shore. Later reports indicated that the ground fog encountered had confused the pilots. (51)

This apparent misfortune turned into good fortune. These paratroopers managed to assemble five 75MM pack howitzers, put them into operation, and by 1500 hours had captured the enemy garrison in the town of St. Tropez. They were assisted in this feat by local members of the French Maquis.

major a/c
When the smoke of the battle had cleared, two hundred and forty German soldiers had been captured and two coastal batteries and one AAA gun battery. (52)

When advance elements of the United States 3d Infantry Division entered the town shortly after 1500 hours, they gave assistance to the soldiers who were still fighting the enemy in that vicinity. Members of this combat team materially helped the 3d Division's operations that day.

Approximately 25 aircraft of another group dropped elements of the 5th Battalion of the 2d Brigade and the 3d Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry Combat Team some 15 miles from designated zones. Many of these troops undertook individual missions while seeking to return to their own units. Included in the group were several personnel of the Intelligence Section. Their exploits in this connection will be enlarged upon further. Also in the group were the Chief of Staff of the Force and several key staff members. (53)

*Artillery CO
Surgeon*

Let us now return to Landing Zone "O", where at approximately 0900 hours, 15 August, the first glider serial had landed. (See Map H)

As the crew cleared the first glider, a subsequent craft in the formation, while attempting to land, had crashed into it. Several crew members in the subsequent craft were injured.

While this action was taking place, crew members of the first

(51) A-5, p. 11; Personal knowledge; Statement of Lt Col Yarborough, CO, 509th Bn; A-12, p. 3; (52) A-1, p. 114; (53) A-5, p. 11; Personal knowledge.

glider assembled in an adjacent vineyard. Other troops landing at this time were also proceeding to their pre-arranged assembly points. In as much as nothing was known of the ground situation then, it was decided to form a patrol and leave the landing area at once. The patrol was formed and began its journey to the assembly point somewhere to the east of the landing zone. Adopting a wedge formation, with the author acting as the point, the patrol proceeded in the appointed direction, taking all advantages of cover and concealment. Several farm houses were approached and searched, but no enemy was encountered directly by the patrol. Continuing, the patrol had progressed about 800 yards when it was met by a British soldier of the Brigade. When asked of the situation, the soldier replied that it was "bloody well all right" where he was, but that that was all he knew about it. This soldier was busily engaged in eating grapes which he had secured from the vineyard. (54)

The patrol then proceeded approximately 400 yards further. At that point, it met several personnel of the advanced command post group who had parachuted in with the Brigade. The patrol was then directed to a farm house to its front. This house was to serve as the first command post site for the task force.

Upon arriving at the house, the patrol met General Frederick's aide, Captain McCall. He informed us that the general had suffered a severely strained ankle while landing and, as a result, was not able to move about to any great degree. Not much was known of the situation at this time, except that the British Brigade had secured the drop and landing zone and was engaged in mopping up isolated enemy in that area. A quick estimate of the situation revealed that the command post would have to be established with a largely depleted staff. The Chief of Staff had not landed at the drop zone; neither had the parachute echelon of the intelligence section. Three people were available for

(54) Personal knowledge.

*Message Center
received letter
in 10/10/44*

intelligence work. Attrition was also evident in the remainder of the staff sections. The task force surgeon and signal officer were absent. Communications could not be established because of enemy jamming and radio transmitting difficulty. (55)

Enemy information at this time was largely obscure. (56)

The situation map was set up at 1100 hours. Very little information was available for posting at the time. As the day progressed the red grease pencil on the map acetate began to show up clearly. Prisoner of war interrogation contributed the bulk of this information. A Journal was set up, but was poorly kept because of the lack of personnel in the section.

Soon prisoners captured by the Second Brigade began to mill around the nearby farm garden which had been established as a prisoner of war cage. Early interrogation revealed that the enemy, while having considered the probability of an attack at the beaches, did not expect an airborne assault in this sector, even though passive measures of defense against airborne attack had been undertaken. Prisoners revealed that the anti-airlanding stakes erected in the zone had been set up by the local Frenchmen. They complained that the job had been poorly done. It was concluded from the prisoners' comments, that the First Airborne Task Force had achieved complete surprise. Here it was determined that the enemy was employing many troops of non-Germanic origin, as earlier intelligence from clandestine agents had indicated. Many prisoners were of Polish and Czech descent; a few were White Russian. These prisoners, and also the native German prisoners captured, were weak in appearance, generally, and created the impression that the troops in the sector were second rate troops.

The interrogation of prisoners on D-Day was sketchy. It was conducted by linguists attached to force headquarters and by the Interrogation of Prisoners of War personnel of the Second Brigade. The services

(55), (56) Personal knowledge.

of both teams had been amalgamated shortly after landing. Most of the attention was directed toward the interrogation of officers and noncommissioned officers captured. It was decided that more information could be compiled that way. Some of these leaders were rather difficult to interrogate. They were willing to talk for the most part, but the situation had changed so rapidly that they were left with little knowledge of the enemy's intentions. The presence of units previously thought to be in the sector was confirmed. A Polish linguist of the brigade conducted his interrogation in a superior manner and contributed much to the information gathered throughout the day. This officer had had a great deal of experience with the German soldier, having been in Warsaw during the Polish blitzkrieg of 1939. During the blitz most of his family had been killed. His emotions, as regarded the German, were consequently sharpened and gave added zest to his interrogation.

A summary of the interrogation conducted on 15 August revealed that the enemy was effectively disorganized as a result of the surprise landing. His chain of command had been disrupted at any early hour on D-Day. An analysis of this information led to the conclusion that quick decisive action would further cause the enemy to reach a state of deterioration quickly. This conclusion was later transmitted to General Frederick at approximately 1700 hours in the afternoon, and to the commanders of the units of the force as soon as contact was established.

Additional information of enemy troop strength, morale, status of supply, and order of battle was secured and hastily evaluated. Lack of sufficient personnel, plus a fast moving situation, did not allow a thorough study of this information. No periodic report containing this information and other intelligence was prepared during 15 - 16 August 1944. Lack of personnel prevented the preparation of such a report.

Many civilians came to the command post during the day and were anxious to give information of the German. Much of this voluntary information was of little tactical value. The emotional characteristics of the French civilian and his lack of military knowledge was the cause

of this. A few of these individuals were vacillating, and they were more of a nuisance than assistance to our efforts. A conclusion that most of this information would have to be taken lightly was soon reached. One such Frenchman was particularly helpful, though not from an intelligence point of view. This native, in whose farmhouse the command post was located, had a very fine vegetable garden which he offered to members of the force. The tomatoes growing there supplemented the "K" ration of D-Day in splendid fashion. (57)

During the day, 15 August, the British Brigade had successfully blocked Highway No. 7 at a point south of Le Muy. This was the main escape route from the beaches as well as the main communications route in the area.

More difficult to capture was Le Muy. Here the enemy put up stiff opposition. The Second Brigade was unsuccessful in its attempt to capture the town. The British Brigadier, commanding the Brigade, reported the fact to General Frederick at the command post in early afternoon. (58)

At this conference with the brigadier, General Frederick decided to assault Le Muy, using an American unit. This plan was dependent, however, on the success of the scheduled landings by the remainder of the task force's forward echelon. This sky train was scheduled to arrive at 1800 hours and was comprised, in the main, of the 551st Parachute Battalion, the 550th Glider Infantry Battalion and supporting troops. (59)

When General Frederick contemplated this plan at approximately 1500 hours, his command post had established communications with the Second Brigade only. Much difficulty had been encountered in opening the command radio nets. Consequently, most of the early operational instructions and intelligence information were delayed in transmission. When finally transmitted, this information was of little value to subordinate units.

(57), (58), (59) Personal knowledge.

During the afternoon a liaison officer brought to the command post information of the day's activity at the 517th Combat Team zone.

A wide dispersal of troops had resulted there during the dropping of the parachutists. Elements of the combat team had landed in the hills east of Tourettes and were forced to adopt guerilla tactics against the enemy while attempting to assemble. These elements, comprised mainly of third battalion troops, had proceeded by early light to Claviers, La Motte, and Les Serres, and by noon had cleared the enemy from these towns.

During the morning hours, this group was joined by members of the Second Brigade. These troops had been dropped in the hills also. Combining efforts, they destroyed an enemy convoy attempting to move reinforcements into the area.

The first battalion of the 517th Combat Team was dropped in the vicinity of Les Arcs and was met with strong enemy opposition immediately. The enemy was attempting to counterattack, when reinforcements from the second battalion arrived on the scene. After a pitched battle, this resistance was overcome, and by 1800 hours the combat team was consolidating its positions in preparation for further activity.

Defensive positions for all zones and objectives captured were established by 1800 hours. (60)

2. Reinforcement

The sun was descending on the western horizon as the remainder of the combat troops of the force flew into sight. The train extended as far as the eye could see and was an awe-inspiring sight for those troops already on the ground. It was a comfortable sight as well, because the position of the force prior to this time had been vulnerable to enemy counterattack. It must have been a severe blow to the enemy's morale also.

The sky train was on schedule. First came the parachutists of the 551st Battalion; their parachutes were silhouetted against the setting sun. This drop was highly successful. All parachutists landed at Drop

(60) Personal knowledge; A-5, p. 13; A-4, Book VII.

Zone "A". Gliders transporting the 550th Battalion, additional headquarters troops, supporting artillery, mortar, and antitank units encountered difficulties similar to those met by earlier glider landings. Many gliders on Landing Zone "O" were wrecked. In spite of this, a majority of troops riding in these craft escaped uninjured, or were only slightly injured. Casualties sustained here will be discussed in a summary of the operation later in this report. Seven gliders in this train were unaccounted for. (61)

Shortly after landing the troops were assembled at their pre-arranged assembly areas and the commanders of both battalions reported to the task force command post nearby. The command post had become fully operational at approximately 1830 hours when the establishment of communications was completed. When the commanders reported at 2000 hours, they were briefed by the intelligence and operations officers as regarded the situation.

Since Le Muy was the key objective in the sector, first priority was given to its capture. It was indicated that about 500 enemy troops were holding the town.

The 550th Glider Infantry Battalion was assigned the mission of capturing Le Muy. The attack was scheduled to jump off at 0230 hours on D plus 1. The commander of the battalion left immediately to make preparations for the attack. (62)

3. Other activities

Most of the personnel who had been dropped miles from the drop zones were brought into the command post at about 2000 hours. They had been successful in their attempt to return. The chief of staff, the artillery officer, the surgeon, and those members of the intelligence section, heretofore absent, were among the group. These men had contributed nothing to the operation of the command post during the day. From the doughboy point of view, however, they had done rather well.

(61) A-11, p. 4; Personal knowledge; (62) A-11, p. 4; Personal knowledge.

While attempting to reach the command post from the mountain foothills, they had intercepted a group of thirty German soldiers who were retreating from the airhead and had engaged in a fire fight with them. Results of this skirmish showed nine enemy killed and several wounded. The American group had suffered two wounded and none killed. The remainder of the enemy escaped. (63)

At 2100 hours, Captain Geoffrey Sanders*, an American officer assigned to the Office of Strategic Services reported into the command post and sought out the intelligence officer. This officer had parachuted into France some two weeks earlier with the mission to contact the Free French Forces of the Interior and organize them into guerilla forces to assist in the operation. He was also charged with securing information about the enemy's activity and his intentions. The task force intelligence officer had been briefed regarding the captain's mission prior to the assault. The captain gave to the intelligence section what information he had secured. Many of these leads were good ones and, conversely, some were not so good.

One report Captain Sanders brought in told of the presence of approximately 15 enemy tanks near Draguignan. (See Map H) These tanks presumably were heading toward Le Muy, evidently to counterattack. At the outset this report caused a considerable flurry at the command post, for obvious reasons. The defenses of the task force at the time were rather skimpy. In evaluating this information, however, it was thought that the report had been exaggerated and probably erroneous. Prior intelligence had revealed no tank units in that vicinity. The vehicles reported by the captain, whose source was a French leader of the Maquis, were thought to be self-propelled guns of the 1048th Unit. In as much as this unit was not considered to be a strong one, it was concluded that there were probably less than half of the number reported. The report was dispatched to the 517th Combat Team, but was qualified with

(63) Personal statement of Lt Col C. B. DeGavre, Chief of Staff, FABTF.
*Fictitious name for security reasons.

our evaluation. A later report by the 517th Combat Team showed the vehicles to be two or three self-propelled guns moving, not in the direction of Draguignan and Le Muy, but away from the Allied Troops as fast as they could go. It should be mentioned here that the Free Forces of the Interior, as organized by Captain Sanders, gave valuable assistance to the First Airborne Task Force in the performance of its mission. (64)

4. The Capture of Le Muy (See Map I)

The 550th Glider Infantry Battalion crossed the line of departure to begin the attack on Le Muy at 0230 hours, 16 August, after an artillery preparation had been laid down. Before the objective was reached, however, enemy close defensive and final protective fires stopped the advance of the battalion. The attack was called off at that point. The battalion was unable to neutralize these enemy fires in the dark. The troops were then ordered back to the assembly area. Staff officers from the command post, including the assistant intelligence officer, were on hand to observe this unsuccessful attempt to take Le Muy. The failure of this attack was attributed to the lack of prior reconnaissance.

1700 hours - 1800 hours
The attack was resumed at 1130 hours. This time, as much reconnaissance as possible was made. During one phase of the reconnaissance, a patrol led by the battalion intelligence officer was captured while attempting to probe the defenses of the town. By 1630 hours, after determined resistance, Le Muy had fallen. The captured patrol was repatriated. Approximately 500 enemy soldiers were captured. Many of these soldiers were service troops of non-Germanic origin. (65)

5. Additional Operations. (See Map J)

During the day of 16 August the 517th Combat Team and the 551st Battalion were ordered to join forces and capture Draguignan. This town was the headquarters of the German LXII Corps. The attack was launched and the town was soon taken. General Ferdinand Neuling of

(64) Personal knowledge; (65) A-11, p. 4; Personal knowledge.

the corps was captured during the action. Important documents captured with the general revealed the order of battle of the corps. These documents which included situation maps and allied papers were rushed to task force headquarters. At the command post, after a quick evaluation, the intelligence officer decided that the papers should be dispatched to VI Corps headquarters as soon as contact was made with the ground forces. (66)

CONTACT WITH GROUND TROOPS

By 1630 hours on 16 August elements of the 191st Tank Battalion made contact with the airborne forces. They were met by that portion of the 509th Battalion which had landed and secured its drop zone on the high ground south of Le Muy. (See Map I) This armored group proceeded immediately into Le Muy where airborne Troops were mopping up the town.

I was in Le Muy waiting to contact the Commanding Officer of this armored group for the purpose of learning the best route to VI Corps headquarters. To prove that truth is stranger than fiction, the officer in charge of the armored group turned out to be my brother whom I had not seen for some time.

After securing the necessary information, I made an attempt to contact liaison personnel operating forward of corps headquarters. During the attempt, I assumed the cleared route to be Highway No. 7. This assumption was shortly to be proven erroneous. Proceeding down Highway No. 7 I quickly found myself in enemy territory. The driver of the jeep was the only other occupant of the vehicle. At that point, some two or three miles south of the town, the enemy was delaying the advance of the 36th Division. The assistant intelligence officer, needless to say, made as hasty a retreat as was possible under the existing circumstances. While in enemy territory, a four man enemy patrol surrendered eagerly to me. They were disarmed and sent to the rear. (67)

Returning to Le Muy, I turned over the documents to corps liaison

(66) A-11, p. 4-5; Personal knowledge; (67) Personal knowledge.

personnel who had just arrived in the town. 45th Division Troops were passing through Le Muy at the time.

This mission of the First Airborne Task Force was accomplished when the mopping up of scattered enemy in Le Muy was completed. (68)

REORGANIZATION

The task force passed to the control of VI Corps and was ordered to reorganize at Le Muy while maintaining its defenses. It was directed to be prepared to protect the right flank of the corps on order.

Glider pilots, who had given assistance to ground commanders after landing, were evacuated to the beaches. The sick and wounded were also evacuated.

The Second Brigade was released from the task force and evacuated to Italy. The First Special Service Force, additional troops, and motor transport were assigned. On 20 August 1944, reorganization was complete.

The First Airborne Task Force was ready for another mission. (69)

A SUMMARY OF THE OPERATION

In summary, the statistics for the First Airborne Task Force in the airborne phase of DRAGOON are as follows:

Casualties of United States airborne personnel due to enemy action included 434 killed, captured and missing, and 292 wounded. The Second Brigade suffered 181 missing in action and 130 wounded. The brigade reported 52 killed in action.

Enemy prisoners captured by United States units were approximately 1000, of which about 350 were hastily interrogated. Those prisoners captured by the British Brigade totaled 350.

Parachute and glider casualties were 283 men; most casualties were glider landing casualties. This involved about 3 percent of the command. 357 of the 407 gliders involved were damaged and were considered un-
(68), (69) Personal knowledge.

salvageable, while only 1000 parachutes were recovered.

Nine hundred and eighty-seven sorties were flown during the operation, and over 9000 troops were flown into the drop and landing zones. Two hundred and twenty-one jeeps and 213 artillery pieces were also flown into the theater.

M.B.O. During the airborne phase, 287 tons of resupply were dropped by parachute, but because of wind conditions and lack of sufficient time to search the area, only 40 percent of these were found.

All flights carried over two million pounds of supplies and equipment into France for the task force. (70)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

When considering the activities of the intelligence section in this operation, the situation existing there left much to be desired. To begin with, the lack of experience on the part of the assistant intelligence officer and other personnel in the section constituted a definite handicap to the proper completion of the intelligence mission. The desires of these individuals to perform properly was apparent, but the "know how" was lacking for the most part.

The task force intelligence officer was able to assimilate and evaluate the most important elements of intelligence information, but many additional elements of intelligence which could have been of value were lost in the maze of activity at the command post. The malfunctioning of the communications equipment was a contributing factor. Even when the communications equipment was functioning properly, inept classification and precedence assigned out-going messages from the intelligence and other sections, made the tasks of communications personnel doubly hard. The resultant factor was too much delay in transmission of many of the messages. N.B.O.

The section failed to collate properly enemy order of battle

(70) A-1, p. 114; A-5, p. 14.

N.R.O. information. The G-2 journal was kept improperly during the period. Better organization for the interrogation of prisoners of war should have been effected. No periodic report was prepared to summarize all enemy information. To state a plain fact, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, because of inexperienced personnel and attrition resulting from landing was swamped in his duties. His ability to make a usable estimate of the enemy situation was evident in spite of all the confusion.

N.R.O. Operating essentially as a skeletonized staff, the members performed many duties not normally considered to be in the respective fields as the exigencies dictated. The smooth functioning which was desired was consequently lacking.

While the bulk of the responsibility rested with the task force intelligence section, it should also be pointed out that the flow of intelligence from subordinate units as well, left something to be desired. Very little intelligence was directed by subordinate units to the task force command post during this operation. Again, the lack of adequate communications is assumed to be the contributing factor. Lack of experience in intelligence activities of subordinate unit staff also entered into this picture.

There was no order of battle team, as such, attached to the force. All order of battle activities were conducted by the officers of the intelligence section. Because of the stress of other duties, only the highlights of the enemy's order of battle were correlated. It would have been advantageous to have had such a team attached in order to collate accurately order of battle information.

This operation, when carefully analyzed, adds merit to the current thinking wherein it is contemplated to make all infantry divisions and supporting arms air transportable. While many of the units in the task force performed admirably in the completion of their several missions, they did not function as smoothly as they should have. Largely, this was due to the complexities of the tables of organization and equipment;

some of the units were never intended to be used as airborne units at their inception.

While criticising the operation of the First Airborne Task Force it must be borne in mind that it was composed of many different types of units which had had only six weeks in which to learn how to get along with each other. Troops of these units were given a commander who, while having much experience and possessing valor of the highest calibre, knew very little of their limitations and capabilities. This information would have been of inestimable value to the commander when determining how to use each unit to its full capability. In spite of this disadvantage, the accomplishment of the mission was done in a creditable manner.

The aggressive attitude of these troops was not impaired by the lack of heavy supporting arms and motor transportation; rather the knowledge of this lack gave the troops of the task force a more determined intention to carry the battle to the enemy and defeat him.

While complimenting the spirit of the troops, the confusion which was prominent in all units on D-Day should not be minimized, but should be pointed out as a situation to be avoided in future operations. Proper training of the soldier should eliminate much of this confusion.

In analyzing the operations of the enemy, it is clear that he suffered severely the lack of communications which was a result of airborne efforts. Commenting before the commander of the First Airborne Task Force upon his capture, the German General Neuling freely admitted that he had no knowledge of the disposition of his troops. He further stated that he had had no information since early on D-Day, at which time the airborne troops landed. He also advised that German intelligence had picked up the diversionary feint at Ciotat. This information made LXII Corps reluctant to committany of its reserves.

The presence of non-Germanic troops was a contributing factor to the early wholesale surrender of many enemy troops. Another factor

was the extreme youth of many of the native German troops. Those units composed of seasoned troops, on the other hand, were tenacious, employing counterattack in several sectors and made the capture of some objectives difficult.

It was apparent from the outset that the repeated losses sustained by the enemy had resulted in an inferior type of soldier compared with the type encountered earlier in the war. At least this was true in Southern France. Prisoners processed through the task force cage bore out this contention forcefully. They appeared to be generally weak in physical stamina and expressed, for the most part, a sense of relief upon being captured.

A situation which further bears out the contention occurred when the author found himself in enemy territory while trying to reach VI Corps personnel, a four man enemy patrol eagerly surrendered.

In concluding the criticism of the airborne phase of the Southern France operation, I would like to quote from the report of Col Harvey Jablonski, an army observer, to the Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces regarding the aspects of the operation. "Characteristic of the fighting qualities displayed by members of The First Airborne Task Force was the enthusiastic manner in which they unhesitatingly attacked successive objectives, despite the numerous handicaps which prevailed. The hostile opposition encountered, however, was at no time sufficiently serious to test the full fighting capabilities of the Force.....The recently completed airborne operation DRAGOON was without doubt the most successful of its kind yet undertaken by Allied Forces in this theater. The commanders of both the airborne and troop carrier units and their subordinates deserve full credit for the excellent manner in which they executed this mission." (71)

It would not normally be within the province of the author to analyze the overall operation DRAGOON. From my limited view as a

(71) A-5, p. 14 - 15.

participant in a subordinate unit of the operation, however, and in true democratic style, I would like to comment briefly on the aspects of DRAGOON. As reported in the introduction to this study, certain persons in high authority have concluded that the operation would not be necessary or even beneficial to the main effort being conducted then in the north. The Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower also reported such allegations in his recent book Crusade In Europe. In defense of DRAGOON the supreme commander pointed out that it would make available more ports and more supply routes, and thereby help speed the war to an earlier successful conclusion. (72)

The German General Neuling upon capture made the point that the success of the Southern France invasion would do much to damage the faltering German morale and in consequence speed the war to an earlier end.

From the view point of a participant in the airborne phase of DRAGOON, it is my belief that the resultant flow of supplies and troops through ports liberated by this invasion contributed its part to the final defeat of the German Army.

LESSONS

Analysis
1. All intelligence, whether verified or not, must be weighed objectively in the commanders estimate of the situation. Had the intelligence regarding the presence of anti-air landing stakes in the landing zone received more consideration, the resultant glider casualties would have been materially less.

2. Prisoner of war interrogation provides the best and most accurate source of enemy information to tactical units engaged in battle. This information is good, however, only if it has been properly substantiated and evaluated.

(72) A-15, p. 181 - 183.

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3. An intelligence staff of a tactical unit must have a thorough organization of its activities, if it is to provide the commander with a sound estimate of the enemy situation.

4. A detailed study of appropriate terrain models and aerial photographs of target areas is essential to the proper planning of an airborne mission behind enemy lines. The inability of airborne commanders to conduct personal "on the spot" reconnaissance makes this need obvious.

N.B.O.
5. Each individual in combat must be intelligence-minded if he is to expect his unit to be properly committed to action. All possible bits of enemy information must be directed to the commander and his staff so as to be evaluated and used to the unit's maximum advantage and to the enemy's maximum disadvantage.

6. Troop carrier pilots must be expert in the technique of navigation when transporting airborne troops to a target area. When the very lives of all the airborne troops are at stake when dropped apart from the main troop release, there can be no justification for navigational failures. The dropping of some 45 planeloads of parachutists 25 miles from drop zones in this operation would have been fatal in consequence for many of them, had the enemy been more tenacious. The climatic conditions which affect navigation must always be carefully considered and anticipated, if possible, in advance of future airborne operations.

7. Communications must be maintained at all costs and alternate means provided in the tables of equipment of combat units. The early loss of communications on the morning of D-Day placed General Neuling in such a dilemma, the consequence of which led to the early surrender and capture of his command. Conversely, the lack of communications on the same day slowed the progress of The First Airborne Task Force. The task force would have been in serious trouble because of this lack had the enemy counterattacked in force on D-Day.

N.B.O.
8. Resupply of airborne troops must be maintained according to schedule. It is mandatory that resupply planes drop such supplies at

clearly defined prearranged locations. Air-ground liaison with respect to resupply must be of the highest type. The fact that a bulk of the resupply intended for United States airborne troops fell into the hands of the civilians and British units was due directly to the lack of the above mentioned factors.

9. All airborne troops whether infantry, artillery or engineers, must be prepared, on occasion, to fight as infantry soldiers. The incident at St. Tropez demonstrates amply this statement. Training of all airborne soldiers in the future must include some basic infantry individual training.

10. Motor transportation in modern warfare on open terrain is a factor which, in many instances, holds the key to success in battle. The serious lack of motor transportation of the enemy contributed to his defeat. On the other side of the picture, airborne soldiers of the future must have better means of motor transport than that enjoyed by the airborne troops participating in this operation.

11. Audacity and aggressiveness must be imbued in the minds of all airborne soldiers, if they are to accomplish their usually assigned missions behind enemy lines. These attitudes, however, must never preclude basic common sense on the part of leaders and such caution as this sense dictates.